

# Putting knowledge into practice: A broad-based innovation strategy for Europe

2006/2274(INI) - 09/09/2009 - Follow-up document

This Staff Working Document presents a review of the progress made since 2005 in delivering Community policies in support of innovation. It gives an overview of the work done to fulfil the objectives set in the 2005 Communication “More Research and Innovation – Investing for Growth and Employment: A Common Approach” and the 2006 Communication “Putting knowledge into practice: A broad-based innovation strategy for Europe”.

The assessment presented in this paper shows that, since 2005, innovation policy moved up in terms of EU policy priorities and became widely recognised as a **key enabler of competitiveness, productivity growth and sustainability**. It is also increasingly recognised that enhanced European cooperation is the way to fully exploit the innovation and creativity potential of Europe in all its diversity. However, it also shows that progress in addressing each of the identified weaknesses of the innovation environment has been uneven. A number of important weaknesses remain, not the least in the area of **Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) protection**.

Innovation support became firmly anchored in Cohesion Policy and was integrated in a wide range of EU funding programmes (e.g. FP7, CIP, LIFE, and Life Long Learning). However, implementation of these programmes is directed by over 20 committees with the participation of some seven Directorates General of the Commission. The programme implementation is done by four different executive agencies, the EIF and a number of Directorates General. In 2006, this situation triggered the call of the Council for more **synergies** between these funding programmes.

Indeed, further changes in the range and number of EU instruments and policies used to support innovation seem necessary, notably to **promote coherence between instruments** and to complement or extend them to cover also demand-led innovation measures.

In order to improve policy making, there seems to be a need for **better assessing the impact of the actions**. For this, it would be necessary to identify ex-ante and in much more detail the problem to be addressed, against which the impact of the action has to be measured later on.

Moreover, the increasing popularity of innovation in a broader range of policy areas bears the risk that the concept and possible economic impacts become diluted, as virtually every change in policy measures is classified as innovation related.

The degree of **connectivity and communication** between the different elements of national, regional and local innovation eco-systems also needs to be enhanced, to strengthen the collaboration between stakeholders.

Lastly, the great interest in the **European Year of Creativity and Innovation 2009**, with hundreds of innovative projects funded from national and EU programmes, bears witness to this. The European Year itself raises the general awareness and policy debate on the role of creativity and innovation in society and economy, widening its traditional scope from research and development to design and creative industries.